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“The US will continue to be a major partner –politically, economically and technologically”: Lt. Gen Satish Nambiar

The US will continue to be India’s major partner –politically, economically and technologically, but with a diluted dominance. This was stated by Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, Director, United Services Institution of India at a Session on ‘Can the US and India be Strategic Partners?’ organised by the Aspen Institute India, here on Wednesday.

According to him, India’s other partners are China, EU, Japan, US and Russia. On the scope and content of the partners he highlighted that there shouldn’t be any compromise on issues of national interest. He emphasized “The strategic relationship is vital for us as it provides a secure and stable environment for our immediate region, although the political tensions will remain on China due to the conflict of interest.”

The session focused on the Defense & Security, Foreign Policy and Economic issues featuring a panel discussion with Mr Phiroz Vandrevala, Executive Vice President, Tata Consultancy Service; Lt General Satish Nambiar, Director, United Service Institution of India and Ambassador S K Lambah, Special Envoy, Prime Minister’s Office, India.

The session moderated by Mr N K Singh highlighted various issues such as the nuclear deal; the building blocks of the US India Strategic Partnership; convergence on economic, political and technological actions for global peace among others.

Lt. Gen. Nambiar as of the view that India needed to shed its defensive approach and think big with greater self-confidence.

He said that for a serious partnership, the US should consider India’s position for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and India should adopt a consultative mechanism with the US in issues related to its immediate neighbourhood.

“As the two government’s agreed on the civil nuclear deal it seems to be the appropriate time to look at the Indo US relationship”, said N K Singh, Former Secretary, Planning Commission of India.

Ambassador S K Lambah, Special Envoy to the Prime Minister called for a speedy cooperation in the Agriculture, Education and Energy.

Emphasizing on the convergence aspect for the bilateral strategic relationship Ambassador Lambah said that India always had a independent foreign policy where as US have dealt with allies but this time India is going to be a partner for US so we need to respect each other’s

foreign policy. He also added India is going to keep relations with Russia, China and a closed relationship with middle east; India should be considered as a major player in the region.

'India is a member of various international institutions for which US should understand and recognize our position specially on issues like agriculture and movement of professionals under WTO regime. As open societies and open economies this strategic relationship will succeed' Mr Lambah added.

Considering Infrastructure as a big issue of contention Mr Vandrevala highlighted Energy as a key area and said 'The silver bullet 'Nuclear deal' if goes through then it will be path breaking and vital for India'.

If we translate the energy needs in to economic activity France and US are strategic partners for India.

He was of the view that most of the US fortune 500 companies operate in India – either by way of direct operations or by way of BPO activity and this generates economic activity in both countries. He observed that 25-40% of the workforce of the top 5 US companies are Indians. This mutual dependence for processes and employment makes India and US strategic partners, he added.

'We need to be reasonably sensible enough on the issues like WTO and the visa regime, he added.

This strategic relationship is irreversible in nature due to the mutual intent and the level playing field' suggested Mr Vandrevala.

New Delhi

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